The Christian News-Letter

Edited by
J. H. OLDHAM

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DEAR MEMBER,

After sending last week's News-Letter to the Press I read the *K-H. News-Letter* of July 5 (No. 208) and found that in it the same note was struck. There is an account of events in France by a contributor "who has had unrivalled opportunities for knowing what has been going on in Europe during the past four years." The corruption of the French national morale and the advantage taken of it are a revelation of the pass to which European civilisation has come. The writer concludes with a warning against the easy optimism that it cannot happen here. It *can* happen here, unless we realise that this invisible weapon of Hitler "is as dangerous as the German air fleet and mechanised divisions, unless we decide to wage war on that field with the greatest vigour, unless we give up our defensive attitude and go out with the flame and religious persuasion of the crusaders in our hearts, to conquer the world for our ideas."

But what *are* the "ideas" for which we want as crusaders to conquer the world? That is the question on which all hinges and to which in the News-Letter we are seeking the answer. We do not want an easy answer, but one that when it is given us will have revolutionary power. Elements of the answer are already present, but no formulation as yet commands the assent of more than a limited circle. It may be that before very long, out of the experiences through which we are passing in common, something will be precipitated which will be found to represent the common conviction of a large body of people about what is essential—the things for which they are ready to live, work, sacrifice and, if need be, die. A great simplicity and clarity of vision is needed to move the nation. This, if we are faithful and expectant, it may please God to give us when the moment is ripe.

The challenge of what we (as a people) are *not* and do not wish to be, may be the means of making clear to us what it is that we *must* be, if there is to be a community of free men bound to one another in mutual loyalty and trust.

The greatest crime of Nazism—worse than its cruelties, persecutions and inhumanities—is that it has poisoned and corrupted the mind of youth and by the centralisation of power destroyed all independent centres of social cohesion. The same disintegrating process is going on in the occupied countries. Man is being set against man, group against group. The seeds of mistrust, suspicion and hatred are being sown. If we win the war, it will be a morally and socially disintegrated Europe with which we shall have to deal. The process of moral recovery may take a generation, perhaps generations.

If there is to be an international order in the future it will have to be created not in blue-prints or in the field of organisation, but in the sphere of *life*. There must be a living example of a nation successfully ordering its life in accordance with the standards and values which are denied and repudiated by the false systems now in the

ascendant in Europe. To furnish that example is the high mission to which this nation is called. But the nation has not yet apprehended its meaning and for that reason is not yet dedicated to its accomplishment. All hope for the future lies in seeing and obeying that vision. Opposed to us is a deified nation; it can be successfully withstood only by a dedicated nation.

BUILDING ON WHAT IS

Among recent letters is one from a social worker of exceptional experience who finds in the News-Letter a tendency to critical aloofness from the actual life of society. The writer urges that, in place of generalised and external estimates of virtues and vices, we should try to grasp the actual beginnings of movements and seeds of potential developments; that we should think of society not as raw material for our purposes, but as a process of growth and network of living relationships; and that our task is not to impose some pattern on it from without, but to recognise and understand the good forces already at work and encourage them. We were unaware, for example, of the latent capacities in our people which burst suddenly into vigour in the evacuation at Dunkirk. How can these creative powers be kept alive and harnessed to the task of creating a better world ? The writer thinks that the answer may lie in learning to look at people differently—in trying to grasp the essential and inner truth of each individual person and the significance of their relationships. This concrete understanding is already finding expression in the best forms of social work. There are far greater resources in ordinary men and women and in common relationships than we have yet succeeded in evoking and making effective for social ends.

THE COUNTY BADGE

One movement which opens up large possibilities for youth is the scheme for a County Badge. The Archbishop of York, in a letter to *The Times* last week, gave his strong support to the scheme. He urged that it should not be allowed to become mechanised; local varieties should be encouraged to the utmost. He also pleaded that the plan should be regarded not as a war-time measure, but as a permanent addition to the training of youth for manhood and service.

The fact that there are the strongest reasons in war-time for developing the fullest capacities of youth between the ages of 16 to 20 for the service of the nation offers what one of my friends has called a " hell-sent opportunity." It is one of the many points at which the evil of war may be turned to permanent gain.

The remarkable resistance of the Finns was the result of pre-military training—of physical fitness, endurance, initiative, skill in using ground and other like qualities. Why should not the whole of our youth be given similar advantages, instead of being left after the age of 14 to lapse into a stunted manhood ?

The County Badge plan is based on continental experience. It has already been tried in Morayshire and in the Sudan. It contains three principal elements.

(a) Tests for jumping, running, throwing, and swimming. There are two standards—one within reach of every boy prepared to stretch his natural powers, the other within reach only of boys capable of moderate all-round distinction.

(b) An expedition test, to be taken only after compass training.

(c) An unfilled gap into which local tradition, aptitude, taste and initiative can pour their contribution.

The Sudan Badge required the throwing of the *safgrog* instead of the javelin. The expedition test was controlled by the head huntsman of the deposed sultan. The

Sudan demonstration has proved that the County Badge plan can serve as an imperial link.

Boys between 16 and 18 have never been more ready for service than they are to-day in presence of national danger. But unused readiness turns sour and throws the young open to subversive movements.

The public schools can to a large extent provide the grounds and trainers. Many of them are not full. A number of them have to evacuate. They could evacuate where they are needed to act as training centres of the County Badge scheme. If a Royal Cup were presented to the county which in proportion to its male adolescents has the greatest number of County Badge awards, we would soon have a formidable youth movement to add strength to this country.

In Moray the County Badge movement before the war led to the formation of a Watcher Corps to watch the coasts. After a year's service members were expected to give this promise: "I promise to serve Hopeman village and this district, through them my King and Country, and Christ through all."

THE VATICAN

There has been no utterance by the Pope since Italy entered the war and no explicit indication of his attitude towards the moral aspects of Italian action.

In the Lateran Treaty of 1929 the Holy See declares "that it desires to take, and shall take, no part in any temporal rivalries between other States." Italy, on the other hand, "recognises the sovereignty of the Holy See in international matters as an inherent attribute, and undertakes in all cases to allow the freedom of correspondence for all States, including belligerents, to and from the Holy See."

It remains to be seen how far the terms of the treaty will be respected by Italy and what independence will be allowed to the Vatican. In any case, with the overwhelming majority of Roman Catholics in Europe under the rule of the Axis Powers, the Pope is placed in a position of great difficulty.

The *Osservatore Romano* is no longer allowed to print comments on the war. Reference is made, however, in *The Times* of July 5, to one or two strongly worded broadcasts from the Vatican. One of these to America urged that Pacifism is wrong when there is a struggle between right and wrong, and another to France as late as July 3 urged that "this is not the time to harken to the counsel of the timid and pusillanimous." A later telegram from Rome to New York reports an editorial article in the *Osservatore Romano* praising the efforts of Marshal Petain to reorganise France. This attitude is believed to reflect fear of a Left Wing revolt in France if the Petain Government should fall.

The attitude of the Pope towards the moral issues of the war was defined in a number of allocutions, broadcasts, addresses and encyclicals prior to Italy's participation in the war. A full collection of these has just been published, together with a biographical sketch by Charles Rankin, in a volume entitled *The Pope Speaks* (Faber and Faber, 7s. 6d.) The most notable among these pronouncements was the allocution to the College of Cardinals on Christmas Eve, in which the Pope laid down the five requisites of a just peace. These, it will be remembered, are:—

(1) An assurance for all nations, great or small, powerful or weak, of their right to life and independence.

(2) The fundamental importance of a mutually agreed, organic and progressive disarmament, spiritual as well as material.

(3) The establishment of some juridical institution which will guarantee the loyal and faithful fulfilment of treaties.

(4) The recognition of the real needs and the just demands of nations and populations and of racial minorities.

(5) The submission of peoples and Governments to the influence of that spirit which alone can give life, authority and binding force to the dead letter of international agreements, and the development of a sense of deep and keen responsibility for the observance of the sacred and inviolable standards of the law of God.

PSYCHOLOGICAL CASUALTIES IN WAR

Air-raids and invasion, if it comes, are bound to bring not only much physical suffering but psychological disorders of various kinds. We ought to know how to deal with these. An address to clergy, air-raid wardens and social workers in Liverpool by Dr. F. Bennett Julian, which has been published as a pamphlet entitled *Psychological Casualties in Air Raids* (S.P.C.K., 9 Northumberland Avenue, London, W.C.2, 6d.), makes clear the nature of the problem and its treatment, and contains wise and helpful advice. The National Council for Pastoral and Medical Co-operation (Miss A. Graham Ikin, 36, Lincoln Road, Blackpool) is giving attention to mental strain in war-time and is willing to arrange for courses of lectures on the subject.

THE CHURCH UNIVERSAL

The Council on the Christian Faith and the Common Life at a recent meeting sent the following message to Christians in other lands:

"We, the Council on the Christian Faith and the Common Life, representing the chief non-Roman Christian communions in Great Britain, send to our fellow Christians in other lands this message of fellowship in Christ. We grieve over the separation which the war causes; we deeply sympathise with those who are suffering in various ways; and we look forward eagerly to the time when we may meet one another again and all of us together may co-operate in the work for the world to which Christ has called us."

Yours sincerely,

J. H. Oldham

Bound Volumes.—We greatly regret the delay in fulfilling orders for C.N.-L. bound volumes. This was due to circumstances beyond our control, but all volumes should by now have been received. One hundred copies were delivered to us on Friday, July 5. Ninety-six of these were sent out the same day, and the remainder on Monday, July 8.

Returned Envelopes.—We wish to take this opportunity of thanking those members who return their C.N.-L. envelopes to us. These are most useful, though for technical reasons the sender is unlikely to receive the same envelope back again.

Subscriptions.—The rate of subscriptions to the News-Letter is 12s. 6d. ($3.0 in U.S.A. and Canada) for one year, and 6s. 6d. ($1.50 in U.S.A. and Canada) for six months, and 3s. 6d. for three months.

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